UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council hears calls for lifting of arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bosnian representative says status quo is unacceptable; Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) warns of uncontrollable escalation of conflict.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement yesterday, welcomes joint decision of Tajik Government and opposition to extend cease-fire agreement until 6 February 1995.

+ Secretary-General, back in New York, voices concern at reports of renewed hostile acts between Iran and Iraq; urges both sides to exercise maximum restraint.

+ General Assembly approves report of Preparatory Committee for Fiftieth Anniversary of United Nations; welcomes commemorative programme for occasion.

+ Special Representative for former Yugoslavia expresses grave concern at deteriorating military situation in Sarajevo; appeals to parties not to endanger safe areas or civilians.

+ United Nations launches inter-agency appeal for $242 million for humanitarian operations in former Yugoslavia in first half of 1995.

+ General Assembly elects 18 States to fill vacancies in Economic and Social Council as of 1 January 1995.

+ Special Commission on disarmament of Iraq starts contingency planning for incremental closure of operations because of shortage of funds; needs $5 million in December to continue current activities.

+ Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee hears statement by UNHCR as it considers refugees and related issues; approves draft resolutions on right to self-determination and elimination of racial discrimination.

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Numerous Member States have called on the Security Council to lift the arms embargo against the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those calls were made at a meeting which began yesterday and continued today, after Pakistan requested that the Council consider the recent General Assembly resolution encouraging it to take such action.

The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina said the application of the arms embargo against both the victim and the well-armed aggressor had failed to bring about peace. "I'm afraid we have reached a point of last resort -- the last resort is the status quo", he stressed. He went on to say that there was no peace for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to keep, and that the benefits of the Force's presence were being outweighed by the costs to the Bosnian people. The representative of Pakistan, speaking also as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina, said the Council should respond swiftly to the recent General Assembly resolution. It should also declare the 51 per cent of the territory proposed for the Muslim-Croat Federation a "safe area".

The representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) warned that lifting the arms embargo would lead to an uncontrollable escalation of the conflict. He said the Council, acting in a one-sided manner, had almost exclusively blamed the Bosnian Serbs for the conflict and for whatever atrocities were committed, ignoring acts committed by the Muslims and the Croats. The representative of Croatia said the Council had imposed an arms embargo on the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia -- a State that had ceased to exist. Instead of perpetuating a mistake, it should consider how lifting the embargo would contribute to a new balance of power in the region. The representative of France warned that the pursuit of a military solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina would halt the political process and lead to the withdrawal of UNPROFOR.

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The Security Council has welcomed the joint decision of the Tajik Government and opposition to extend to 6 February 1995 the 17 September Agreement on a temporary cease-fire and cessation of hostile acts in Tajikistan. In a statement read out yesterday by its President, Madeleine Albright (United States), the Council also welcomed the signing of the Protocol of the Joint Commission charged with monitoring the Agreement.

The Council welcomed the reaffirmation by the parties to resolve the conflict through political means and the agreement to hold the next round of talks in early December in Moscow. It emphasized the importance of full and timely implementation by the parties of their obligations. Reaffirming its support for the Secretary-General's efforts to facilitate the political dialogue between the parties, the Council invited them to make all necessary efforts to achieve further progress in the next round of talks. It also asked the Secretary-General to present recommendations on the United Nations role in implementation of the agreements.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, back in New York after visiting several countries, today expressed concern at reports of a renewal of hostile acts between Iran and Iraq. He urged both sides to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from all such acts which could only lead to an increase of tension in the area.

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The General Assembly today welcomed the commemorative programme being formulated by the secretariat of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It requested that emphasis continue to be placed on the development of programmes addressing the general public, in particular youth and children.

In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly approved the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. It decided that the Committee should continue its work and report to the Assembly at its fiftieth session and/or during the forty-ninth session, as required. The Assembly will hold a special commemorative meeting for the fiftieth anniversary at Headquarters from 22 to 24 October 1995.

In a second resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly endorsed the creation of a United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary Coin Programme. It also endorsed the offer of the United Kingdom Royal Mint to manage that programme and requested the secretariat to make the necessary arrangements to implement it.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi has expressed grave concern at the deterioration in the military situation in Sarajevo in recent days. He called attention to increasing violations of agreements regarding the Mount Igman demilitarized zone, the Sarajevo cease-fire and heavy-weapons exclusion zone, and the cessation of sniping. Saying he was particularly disturbed by the reported deaths of four civilians -- three of them children -- yesterday, he urged both warring parties to make every effort to avoid civilian casualties and provocative acts.

Mr. Akashi noted a general increase in the level of hostilities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, and appealed to the parties to refrain from military action which endangered safe areas and the civilians in them. He stressed that humanitarian agencies and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) were doing everything possible to alleviate civilian suffering, and reiterated the need for the warring parties to accept a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

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The United Nations today launched a revised inter-agency appeal for $242 million to provide humanitarian assistance to the former Yugoslavia for the first six months of 1995. The appeal was issued jointly by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen, and the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata. They noted that while some regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina were benefiting from a cessation of hostilities, civilians in other areas suffered harassment and insecurity, and were subject to ethnic expulsion. Those civilians were in extreme need of international protection and assistance, they said.

Refugees and internally displaced persons continue to need emergency assistance, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs), according to the appeal. Continuing unrest and ethnic conflict in the Bihac pocket in northern Bosnia has resulted in fresh outflows of refugees, while the unsettled situation in eastern Bosnia could give rise to an exodus there. Meanwhile, assistance is still needed in Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, where the situation has stabilized somewhat.

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The General Assembly yesterday elected the following 18 States to fill vacancies in the 54-member Economic and Social Council: Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda and the United States. The new members will serve three-year terms, beginning on 1 January 1995.

The election was held to fill seats being vacated by Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Italy, Kuwait, Madagascar, Philippines, Poland, Suriname, Swaziland and the United States. States are eligible for immediate re-election.

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The United Nations Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq is so short of funds that it has started contingency planning for the incremental closure of its operations. In a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 3 November, the Executive Chairman of the Commission warned that if adequate funds were not received, non-resident inspection teams would cease to be deployed into Iraq on or about 15 December. Resident monitoring teams would gradually halt operations as personnel would not be replaced. Ongoing monitoring and verification support teams would not carry biological and chemical monitoring equipment into Iraq in December, and would begin to remove remote site cameras and other sensor equipment in January. Meanwhile, operational and analytical staff in New York would be dispersed.

The Special Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would continue to carry out their duties for as long as possible, and to seek the necessary funds, the Executive Chairman stressed. If operations and planning were to continue at the present level, $5 million dollars would be needed in December. A total of $25 million would be needed in 1995, including the $5 million for December.

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A proposal to deploy international police and/or military personnel to refugee camps in eastern Zaire will be presented to the Security Council within days, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) today. Introducing reports on refugees and related issues, she said such a deployment, which had been agreed on yesterday at a meeting chaired by the Secretary-General, was needed because of insecurity in the camps. She added that the forces of the former Rwandese regime were endangering the lives of refugees and humanitarian workers, disrupting aid deliveries, and obstructing voluntary repatriation to Rwanda.

Yesterday, acting without a vote, the Third Committee approved a draft resolution on the right to self-determination and two drafts on the elimination of racial discrimination. By the draft on self-determination, the General Assembly would declare its firm opposition to acts of foreign military intervention, aggression and occupation. It would also call on States responsible to immediately cease their military intervention in, and occupation of, foreign territories and all acts of repression and maltreatment.

By another draft, States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination would be urged to take measures to enable the entry into force of certain amendments to the Convention. Those amendments would call for the Secretary-General to provide for the effective performance of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which monitors implementation of the Convention. The other anti-racism text would have the Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue to ensure adequate financial arrangements to enable the Committee to function. It would also urge States parties to the Convention to accelerate their domestic ratification of the amendment concerning the Committee's financing.

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